Spotlight

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FEORP Annual Report Submitted to Congress

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has submitted its annual report to Congress on FEORP. The Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program (FEORP) annual report is required by Section 310(e) of the Civil Service Reform of 1978, for the purpose of providing Congress with information on the activities of OPM and executive agencies concerning implementation of FEORP.

OPM's first program year report (FY 79) concentrated on the activities and processes undertaken by the various agencies to develop and implement the program. The FY 80 report describes in more detail the extent to which Federal agencies are carrying out the program, the progress agencies have made in meeting program objectives and activities undertaken by OPM to monitor and evaluate the program.

The report indicates that most agencies have developed FEORP plans. The two problems most frequently identified by agencies as impediments to program implementation and success were the hiring freeze imposed by the President in March 1980 and the lack of resources allocated to the program.

The methods used to recruit minorities and women for occupations identified by agencies as their priorities included the full range of activities recommended by OPM in the FEORP program guidance. The most effective external recruitment activities reported by agencies included:

- —special outreach programs designed to bring members of underrepresented groups into entry level positions and to develop them for higher level jobs;
- —extensive campus recruitment at schools with high enrollments of minorities and women;
- —visits to American Indian Tribal Councils;
- —establishment and use of cooperative education programs for positions at the GS-5/7 level;
- —use of the National Urban League's skills bank for senior level positions (GS-13/14/15)
- —participation in career seminars relating to specific occupations; and
- —establishing working relationships with organizations specifically involved in minority recruitment such as the Vacancy Outreach Service and the Consortium for Black Professionals.

For internal recruitment, the most effective recruitment activities and methods reported were:

- —staffing through the Upward Mobility program at the GS-5/7 level;
- —allocating a percentage of agency intern program positions to be filled internally;
- —seeking referrals from current employees for positions through the GS-8 level; and
- —enlisting the support and involvement of special emphasis program managers and coordinators (e.g. Federal Women's Program and Hispanic Employment Program) in identifying and attracting minority and female applicants.

Following is an excerpt from the conclusions drawn by OPM in that report. "Federal agencies and OPM have made considerable strides in implementing the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program and have allocated substantial resources to their implementation efforts. Some progress has been made in eliminating and/or reducing underrepresentation. It is too early to judge its potential for greater success in eliminating underrepresentation of minorities and women in the Federal employment sector.

"It is a new program for which neither OPM nor the agencies were funded. Agencies must learn to understand it fully and then communicate that understanding throughout subordinate organizational levels. Tools must be developed and implemented to make assessment of applicants possible.

"The relationship between FEORP and the affirmative action program administered by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission must be clarified. OPM, EEOC and most Federal agencies are engaged heavily in activities directed toward those ends.

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Recruiting: How Much is Art? How Much is Science?

As with many other aspects of personnel work, *researchers have studied job candidate behavior to find the most effective procedures to follow.* Recently, a trio of U of Wisconsin-Madison researchers looked through the journals and book lists of the last 20-odd years for work on recruiting and selection. A large percentage of the research had younger people up to college age as subjects. The research supports a number of ideas and practices subscribed to by experienced recruiters while pointing up some of the difficulty in running a really tight user-oriented recruiting system.

• *It matters a great deal who does the organization's talent searching.* Job candidates expect the recruiter to have read their resumes or applications and to be able to provide a considerable amount of information about the job offered. Applicants, however, seem to respond better to people who are thoroughly familiar with the work to be done.

• *The recruiter's personality is important.* The enthusiastic, warm, friendly person seems to make the most favorable impression. The man or woman with a "smooth" presentation is likely to be considered more competent; however, an age factor seems to operate. Younger recruiters aren't downgraded for being less than "smooth."

• No research has been done to determine whether the recruiter's sex is a crucial matter; however, one study reported that blacks seemed to respond more positively to recruiters of their own race.

• *Prompt follow-up is important in keeping candidates interested.* Minorities are quicker than others to interpret a slow follow-up as lack of interest. Another study indicates that a regular follow-up with those who have accepted job offers increases the likelihood they'll actually turn up to take the job.

• It's not clear yet to what extent a "realistic job preview" affects subsequent turnover rates.

• In general, *job applicants don't like recruiters who talk too much or who conduct too highly structured an interview.* Conversely, too loose a structure to t interview is also offputting. The researchers say, "In general, applicants appear to prefer interviews with high 'face' validity—i.e., those in which the content stresses applicant qualifications and characteristics of the jobs to be performed."

• *Job-related tests, whether of the paper-and-pencil or work sample variety, generally go over all right with applicants.* One study suggested that performance tests may have a slight edge in acceptability over paper-and-pencil exercises covering the same ground.

The summary "Individual Reactions to Organizational Recruiting: An Overview" was made by Sara Rynes, Herbert Heneman, III, and Donald Schwab. Their paper which covers 47 journal artic and books, appeared in *Personn Psychology* 1980, issue number 3.

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"Still, it will take time before it is possible to determine whether these efforts and resources, and the statutory provisions themselves, are appropriate means for meeting the objective of having a Federal work force that represents the diversity of the nation's population, as expressed in the first merit principle of the Civil Service Reform Act."

Requests for copies of this report may be addressed to: Office of Personnel Management, Office of Affirmative Employment Programs, 1900 E Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20415.

CCR Report

Success of Asian Americans: Fact or Fiction? is the title of a new report published by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The 27-page report contrasts the popular stereotype of the successful Asian American with the actual economic, educational and occupational status of Asian Americans today, and concludes that Asian Americans have been and continue to be adversely affected by that stereotype. A single copy of this publication is available without charge from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Publications Warehouse, 621 N. Payne Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314.

GAO Reports

The General Accounting Office has issued two reports of interest: "Achieving Representation of Minorities and Women in the Federal Work Force" (FPCD-81-5), December 3, 1980, and "How to Make Special Emphasis Programs an Effective Part of Agencies' EEO Activities" (FPCD 80-55), August 27, 1980.

Copies of both reports may be obtained from the U.S. GAO Document Handling and Information Services Facility, P.O. Box 6015, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20760.

Race and Ethnic Identification of Employees

During the next several months Federal employees will get the opportunity to voluntarily identify themselves by race or ethnic group.

This information is safeguarded by Federal agencies under strict procedures issued by the Office of Personnel Management.

Agencies will collect and maintain the information for the Central Personnel Data File which provides the statistical basis for generating Congressionally-mandated reports on the status of minorities in the Federal civilian work force. These data are also needed to evaluate the effectiveness of affirmative employment programs and the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures.

The one-time effort complies with a Department of Commerce directive issued in May 1978, requiring all Federal agencies to collect and maintain ethnic data using a common set of race and national origin definitions.

In addition, the new system provides permanent procedures for collecting such data on new employees.

Following the directive, all agencies are converting from the old minority categories to the new, which are:

- Black, not of Hispanic Origin
- Hispanic
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- White, not of Hispanic Origin
- Not Hispanic in Puerto Rico

For the first time, under the new coding system, employees who have origins in the Indian subcontinent will be coded as "Asian or Pacific Islander."

FPM Letter 298–10, dated September 26, 1980, established the use of Standard Form 181—Race and National Origin Identification, 7/80 edition, as the form to be used by agencies to collect racial and national origin data from new employees when they enter on duty. The GSA's Federal Supply Service has advised us that Standard Form 181 is available for issue from GSA Depots. Consult FPM Bulletin 298–29, dated November 14, 1980, for ordering instructions.

Personal Assistants for Handicapped Employees

On December 12, 1980, President Carter signed Public Law 96–523, "Employment of Personal Assistants for Handicapped Employees", which will authorize the employment of personal assistants for handicapped Federal employees and compensate personal assistants for Federal advisory committee members.

Leading the way for this new authority was the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978 which provided parallel accommodations for deaf and blind persons by providing a means to pay for the services of interpreters and readers.

Personal assistants hired under this new law may receive pay from the handicapped employee, a nonprofit organization or from the agency itself.

Office of Personnel Management Deputy Director Jule M. Sugarman said, "The services that would be authorized are essential and will contribute to the productivity and work effectiveness of many talented, although disabled, members of the Federal work force. It is a matter of equity that we begin to provide services to physically handicapped employees in the same way as we now provide services for blind and deaf persons. This law ends a system of treating the needs of handicapped employees differently depending upon the nature of the handicap."

The governmentwide cost for providing personal assistant services is expected to be minimal. Although a few persons are likely to require more extensive personal assistance, the majority currently function at work with either minimal or no personal support services.

As with reading and interpreting services, the majority of services required on a day-to-day basis will be performed by other employees. Also, modern technology has produced equipment that increases the independence of severely disabled people, such as electric wheelchairs, adapted telephones and dictating machines, and aids for turning pages.

Spotlight

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The Director of the United States of America Office of Personnel Management has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of public business required by law of this agency. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the Director, Office of Management and Budget through May 30, 1982.

Training Course Schedule

The following training courses on Affirmative Employment Programs are offered at the Personnel Management Training Center through August, 1981:

- Advanced Workshop for Federal Women's and Hispanic Employment Program Managers—Aug. 10–14
- Affirmative Recruitment: The Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Porgram—May 21–22, Aug. 20–21
- The Federal Women's Program: A Workshop—April 13–15, July 29–31
- The Hispanic Employment Program: A Workshop—May 6–8, Aug. 17–19
- Selective Placement of the Handicapped: A Seminar for Coordinators—July 22–24
- Upward Mobility: Career Counseling—Mar. 4–6, June 3–5, Aug. 10–12
- Upward Mobility: Planning and Implementation—Aug. 25–28

(These courses are offered in Washington, D.C.; for further information contact the Personnel Management Training Center, US Office of Personnel Management, PO Box 7230, Washington, DC 20044. Many of the same courses are offered at OPM's Regional Training Centers; for information on course offerings, contact the nearest OPM Regional Office.)

Direct-Hire Authority for Engineers

The Office of Personnel Management has issued FPM Bulletin 337–56, dated December 23, 1980, authorizing a national direct hire authority for Engineers GS–5 through 11. This Bulletin authorizes all agencies to appoint any qualified engineer at GS–5 through 11 in any professional engineering occupation.

The direct hire authority is effective as of December 23, 1980 and will expire on September 30, 1981. Prior to the expiration date OPM will assess the need for continuation of this authority into fiscal year 1982. The authority is based on the continuing shortage in engineering occupations and is designed to enable agencies to make offers of employment in an expeditious manner. The FPM Bulletin provides further specific instructions. Copies should be available in your servicing personnel office.

Personnel Awards

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management on Friday, January 9, 1981, held its Second Annual Awards Ceremony to recognize outstanding achievements in furthering civil service reform.

The Ribicoff-Percy Award for excellence in civil service reform implementation, went to the Department of the Navy for innovative efforts in developing an example of how Government and academia can work together in promoting research and demonstration projects. The Udall-Derwinski Award, also for excellence in civil service reform implementation, went to two Cabinet departments: the U.S. Department of Agriculture, for delegated examining; and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, "for prompt and vigorous efforts in placing into operation the performance appraisal concepts embodied in the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978."

Awards for excellence in management reform were presented to the State of Mississippi, the City of Lakewood, Colorado, the Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (ITCN), and Metropolitan Dade County, Florida.

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